

A
FUNERAL SERMON,

ON THE DEATH OF

MR. I. I. Jun.

Ivison Att^o
PREACHED AT *at paddington*

BENTINCK CHAPEL,

St. MARY-LE-BONE;

On SUNDAY EVENING,

FEBRUARY, the 23d. 1794,

And published at the request of the Congregation.

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As the profits arising from this sermon are devoted to the relief of a distressed family, the editor will be much obliged by the efforts of his friends to promote its circulation.

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objects of its collection, and to make them accessible
to the public.

A

FUNERAL SERMON.

JEREMIAH, c. xxxi. ver. 18, 19, 20.

I HAVE SURELY HEARD EPHRAIM BEMOANING HIMSELF THUS, THOU HAST CHASTISED ME, AND I WAS CHASTISED, AS A BULLOCK UNACCUSTOMED TO THE YOKE: TURN THOU ME, AND I SHALL BE TURNED: FOR THOU ART THE LORD MY GOD.

SURELY AFTER THAT I WAS TURNED, I REPENTED; AND AFTER THAT I WAS INSTRUCTED I SMOTE UPON MY THIGH: I WAS ASHAMED, YEA, EVEN CONFOUNDED, BECAUSE I DID BEAR THE REPROACH OF MY YOUTH.

IS EPHRAIM MY DEAR SON? IS HE A PLEASANT CHILD? FOR SINCE I SPAKE AGAINST HIM, I DO EARNESTLY REMEMBER HIM STILL: THEREFORE MY BOWELS ARE TROUBLED FOR HIM; I WILL SURELY HAVE MERCY UPON HIM, SAITH THE LORD.

THE words of our text exhibit a specimen of a nation, or an individual, humbled under a sense of transgression, and earnestly applying for pardon, and mercy.— We here behold a penitent bemoaning his offences, confessing and forsaking his sins, and casting himself on the clemency of his God.— While at the same time his God is introduced as receiving him with every possible expression

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expression of tenderness and concern. We behold the *great* JEHOVAH coming, as it were, to meet the sinner on his return, with every assurance of his paternal regard, boundless compassion, and pardoning mercy.— Who can glance on such a subject without exclaiming on the one hand, “ Lord what is man that thou shouldest be mindful of him?” and on the other hand O Lord of Hosts “ *who is a God like unto thee.*”

I shall in the first place take a summary view of the meaning of the text; and secondly consider it as applicable to the present occasion.

I. Ephraim in this place signifies the ten Tribes. The chapter seems to have a prophetic reference to the glorious day when God will recal his ancient people the Jews.— At the same time, saith the Lord, will I be the God of all the families of Israel, and they shall be my people.— Judah and Ephraim are then successively introduced as returning to the Lord their God.— The passage before us more particularly describes Ephraim weeping for sin, and looking up to heaven for mercy. He is represented as adverting to his state of transgression. “ Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke:” He looks back with shame and remorse; “ I have
“ been negligent and rebellious; I have departed
“ from thee my God. Thou didst visit me with
“ affliction; I justly deserved it; I felt the anguish;
“ yet, like a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke, I
“ received

“ received not correction : I was chastened, but not
 “ amended. I was obstinate, impatient of restraint,
 “ rebellious against thy law, and providence.”

Ephraim is then represented as becoming sensible of his perverse conduct. He prays to the Almighty to grant him true repentance; he acknowledges that God only could change his corrupt nature; and that the power of God, if vouchsafed, would be effectual. “ Turn thou me and I shall be turned; for thou art the Lord my God.”

The case of Ephraim is applicable to the general state of mankind.— Is not man by nature in consequence of the fall far departed from original righteousness? is he not self willed, self sufficient, and impetuous? Is he not impatient of the restraints of God’s holy Law, and righteous providence? Let inspiration decide. * “ The carnal mind is enmity against God, it is not subject to the Law of God.” † The natural Man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. Alas! when God speaks to men on the evil and danger of their sins; in general, how few pay the least attention! even when afflicted, how many do but grow hardened more and more!

When a sinner becomes really sensible of his sin and misery, he then begins to call upon God. As it was said of Saul of Tarsus, “ Behold he prayeth.” My friends, examine your own state before God

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that

* Romans, c. viii. v. 7

† 1 Corinthians, c. ii. v. 14.

that the knowledge of your necessities may excite in you an earnest cry for mercy.

The 19th. verse describes his conversion, and his turning to God.—“ Surely after that I was turned, I repented.”—The influence of the holy Spirit produced a change.—The sinner repented; he thought seriously of his transgression; his neglect of God, and eternal concerns, filled him with remorse: he felt that godly sorrow which is never repented of.—“ After that I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh.” Being taught of God to bemoan the evils of his conduct, the base ungrateful part, which he had acted, he was filled with self indignation; his sorrow was vehement; his very soul was alarmed in an agony of grief. “ I was ashamed; yea, even confounded,” filled with horror, and abasement, “ because I did bear the reproach of my youth.” Melancholy retrospect!—To have no other reflection upon the early part of life, but that instead of remembering my Creator in the days of my youth, I devoted the prime of life not to God, but wickedness and dissipation.

Behold here the portrait of a true penitent. By perceiving the infinite excellence and purity of the divine Law, he perceives the infinite evil of his sins. The exceeding sinfulness of his offence, his ingratitude, his rebellion, and the impending curse of the just judge, overwhelm him with shame, self reproach, and alarm.—His cry is “ for thy name’s sake O Lord pardon my sin; for
it

it is great." True repentance consists in a due sense of sin, an unfeigned sorrow on account of it, an holy resolution to forsake it, and turn to God. It is one of those gifts, which Jesus Christ is exalted to bestow; when the grace of God turns the heart of a sinner, then the sinner repents. The means, by which it is accomplished, is by divine instruction, "after that I was instructed, I smote on my thigh." The prayer of the Savior in behalf of all his people was "sanctify them by thy truth." By the perception of this truth, the sinner is divinely instructed; he feels the practical efficacy; he smites upon his thigh and repents.

The 20th. verse is a display of the boundless compassion of the GREAT GOD.

We behold a rebellious child trembling before his presence, and dreading his indignation. We behold the GREAT JEHOVAH not armed with vengeance, but graciously condescending to acknowledge him as a child. "Is Ephraim my dear son? is he a pleasant child?" O the humility of God! how ready to own the relationship! The prodigal is accosted with infinite tenderness. The Most High, as it were, uses efforts to encourage him, "since I spake against him" in the rebukes of providential dispensation, "I do remember him still."

My friends, all God's ways are ways of mercy; their design is uniform; it is the real benefit of man.

Joseph

Joseph judged it expedient to speak distantly to his brethren, at the very time his bowels yearned over them. Gen. c. xliii. Here the great God is represented, as exercising the same disposition. "I do remember him still." "In a little wrath I have hid my face from him, but with everlasting mercies will I gather him:" "I will surely have mercy upon him saith the Lord." I will pardon his sins, heal his backslidings, speak peace to his distressed soul. I will assure him of my divine favor, and admit him to all the privileges of my love. "I will SURELY have mercy;" according to my covenant engagement, I will not cast him off; I will be HIS GOD for ever and ever.

Who can view this subject without exclaiming, how great must the sin be of neglecting such a GOD? O what base ingratitude, to disregard the Father of such mercies! How obdurate the heart of that sinner, on whom such divine love as this produces no effect!

On the other hand, how rich in mercy is God to all, who call upon him! How great the goodness he hath laid up for every sinner, who will turn to him and live! O despise not the riches of his grace, and forbearance; rather let divine goodness lead thee to repentance. Ye, who have been humbled on account of your sins; ye, who drawing near by faith, have taken hold of the promises of the Gospel, to your consolation; proclaim

proclaim to others the sweet memorial of God's loving kindness: tell others what a gracious reception you met with; how rich in glory the Salvation of the gospel is, both as to present happiness and future expectation.

We have thus briefly stated from the text the depravity and apostacy of man; and the glorious character of God, as slow to anger and abundant in mercy. Let us now, in the second place, take a view of this subject, as exhibited in real life.

I stand here this evening to preach a funeral sermon on the death of Mr. I. I. jun.* His character in this neighbourhood is well known. Many here present were acquainted with him; and I doubt not that many and various are your conjectures, as to what I shall advance on the subject.—My friends, I came not here with any intention to flatter his memory. A christian pulpit must abhor the appearance of falsehood or dissimulation. Nor was I desired by his surviving friends to preach a funeral sermon. I requested their permission to preach on this occasion. My reason was this; I visited him in his last illness; I felt considerably affected by the interview; I trust it was profitable to me; and I desired to address you on the subject in hopes that the recital with a few plain observations might be profitable to you. The God, who searcheth the heart, knoweth I have no
other

* By request of the family the initials are only inserted.

other motive. I now entreat every one here present to lift up his heart in prayer to God, that a divine blessing may attend these feeble efforts.

I shall first speak a few words on his general character.

In his youth he was pious, and walked in the ways of God. As he grew older he forgot God his Savior, and most awfully departed from him. As his life drew to a close, I trust that like a penitent, with a contrite and broken heart, he returned to his heavenly Father; I trust that he experienced a gracious reception, and found the consolation of it in his dying moments.

In his days of early piety, he was happy; experience taught him that wisdom's ways were ways of pleasantness, that all her paths were peace. In the season of his departure from God he was miserable.— He had recourse to most wretched expedients to appease the voice of an accusing conscience. He lost the happiness, which he once found in the ways of God; he sought an asylum in the horrid principles of infidelity; he affected ease of mind, and a jocular spirit, at the very time that he was inwardly agitated with horror.

Thus urged by impetuous passions he fled far from God, and was betrayed into a series of
sinful

sinful courses, and vicious irregularities.— But for this, he might have been now living! Alas! his days were shortened! and death approached. The prospect of dissolution arrested his soul and taught him that there was no time to trifle with. Convictions were brought home.— Alarmed and reduced to extremities, he began to call upon God.— His language was “ I will arise and go to my Father, I will confess my iniquity and be sorry for my sin.” He cried for mercy with great earnestness— God, I trust, heard his cry and helped him.—

I would speak with great caution on a death bed repentance.— I have witnessed, alas! too often, how little dependence is to be placed on those alarms of conscience, which the dread and prospect of death excites.— Yet, as far I can endeavour to decide, I humbly trust that our deceased brother died a true penitent, and through faith in the great sacrifice of Jesus Christ, is now before the throne of God and the Lamb.— The Thursday preceding his departure, I was sent for at his request to visit him.— I had no other acquaintance with him but this, that I knew he occasionally attended divine service at this Chapel; and I had heard him spoken of as one that scoffed at divine things.

At my first entrance into his chamber, I felt a good deal shocked with the change in his person; the ravages of sickness, and approaching death

were so awfully visible.— His first words were, “ ah! Sir, you come to a sad scene,— a sick bed,— and a miserable sinner in it.”— Lifting up his hands and eyes, he cried out “ O there is scarce a sin left undone by me.— I have run into the very sinks of iniquity, &c.— in spite of an indulgent God, and mercies upon mercies.— Can there yet be any hope for such a sinner?— will God receive me? &c.”

“ I have no expectation of life; all I want is to have my pardon sealed, and to know my interest in the blood of a precious Savior, before I go hence, and am no more seen” &c.— After a short pauze, he added “ I do not send to you, Sir, to tell you what ground of hope I have in myself, what righteousness I have to recommend me to God, &c.— no; I have none;— God is just;— his laws are just;— my sin has no excuse;— I was instructed by a godly Father; I knew better than I acted—I deserve eternal condemnation.”

I then proceeded to state the nature of true repentance, and proposed several questions to him.— Being satisfied, as far as I could judge, that he was brought to a true sense of sin, I mentioned the mercy of God in Christ Jesus, the infinite merit of his blood, and his readiness to receive repenting sinners.— He replied “ I bless God, I am not ignorant of these truths; nor am I at times without hope that God will
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be merciful to me.— O how many instances of his mercy have I already experienced, when I was wandering from him and living in open sin! — My heart is broken! I feel overwhelmed with my dreadful apostacy on the one hand,— and the boundless mercies of my God on the other.”

I asked, when these serious impressions commenced? and whether any particular event was the means of them?

He replied “ Oh! my life is an awful narrative. In early years I knew God, when about 17 years old.— I found heaven on earth in his service.— I delighted in his ways.— I walked in holy joy with God.— I loved solitude that I might the more enjoy his presence; I seemed to feel that opened communication with heaven, that my prayers seemed to be answered, before they were expressed:— but, alas! as I grew older, I was ensnared by the world; betrayed into licentious company; I fell into sin, and forgot God.”—I asked „did these sad changes take place without many awful reflections? stings of conscience, &c?”

He replied, “ O no; my fall was by sudden temptation; my youthful passions were strong;— after my sin I grew MISERABLE; I lost my happiness in God; instead of returning, I fled from

him; and being unhappy, I strove to forget God by plunging into sin."

But, I adjoined, did no subsequent event ever revive your convictions, or desires after God?—"Alas! (he said) I lost many near and dear relations; I had many awful providences very near me, many warnings, many narrow escapes, &c." Here he was quite overwhelmed by the keenness of his feelings; and after a short space added "the relation is more than I can dwell upon; I am too weak to bear it.—Instead of being brought back to my heavenly Father, I wandered more and more.—I was miserable, when I reflected;—I frequently made resolutions;—yet I departed from God, and run into the very sinks of iniquity.

After various interspersed remarks on the above melancholy detail; I asked, "when, Sir, did your serious reflections revive? when did you begin to feel this deep contrition and desire to return to God?" he replied "Ah! wretch that I was! I returned like a wretch to him; I never felt my heart truly returning, till death told me, that I must soon stand before him; O never till I found there was no other refuge, but that I must fly to him, or PERISH.—Before this time I sought for refuge in sin; I used expedients to allay reflections, and had recourse even to infidelity;—Ah! how oft have I argued against divine things,—at the same time convinced of their truth, and miserable under the conviction.—Yet so strange and inconsistent was I, that I could not bear to hear others
speak

speak against the truth ; and always vindicated it when they did.— O what an instance of divine goodness that after all my slighted mercies, warnings, admonitions, &c, God did not cut me off by a sudden stroke !— What a mercy that I am not left to be hardened ! what a mercy that I am not now consigned to die in despair !”

He then requested to receive the holy communion; and, after fixing the time, I left with him a treatise on the mercy of God to repenting sinners, and took my leave.

Saturday January 29th, he was much weaker, and could not set up ; I found that his mind was very calm, and reposed on the promises of the Gospel ;— but he could not bear much conversation.— After the ordinance was over, he spake with great gratitude and affection to his Father ; implored the blessing of God upon him for his many prayers and spiritual advice ; and lamented that he ever disregarded it.— He then addressed me ; “ while I continue here, I hope you will look in upon me, as often as you can ;— but I have no idea of recovery ; if I live, I may depart from God again ; I had rather die ;— I wish to die ;— I have a persuasion that I shall die.— I think that I see my Savior beckoning me to his arms ; and it is best for me to go to him”.—He then expressed great affection towards me, thanked me for my visit with undue gratitude, and prayed that God would bless me in my ministry.

Death

Death prevented another interview.— He grew worse on Monday; and on Tuesday morning the 31st of January expired.—His last words were “ I know that my Redeemer liveth.”

Thus died Mr. I. I. Junior,— at the age of 36. You have heard a few particulars respecting his last illness and death.— I have delivered them to you with simplicity and plainness.— I shall now endeavour to make a few practical observations on the subject.

When the idea of preaching to you on the occasion first occurred to me, I considered; could our deceased brother, return from the world of spirits, and address a congregation, with whom he had so often assembled, what subjects would he probably most seriously enlarge upon?— Surely, with all the earnestness of eternal conviction, as one, whose state was **FOR EVER UN-ALTERABLY** fixed, he would enforce—the great advantages of religious education and early piety—he would warn us of the great danger and misery of departing from the living God;— he would urge on us the deceitful appearances of earthly happiness:— he would strive to alarm our consciences, and awaken us to true repentance; and he would endeavour to allure us to serious preparation for eternity, by proclaiming to us the long suffering mercy, and pardoning love of our heavenly Father.

I shall now, by the divine blessing, endeavour under the influence of this reflection to propose a few considerations on each of these subjects.

I. The great advantages of a religious education and early piety.

“Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the year draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them.” This was the solemn injunction of the wisest of men.—— To the same purpose speaks his royal Father, Psa. cxix. 9. “Wherewith shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word.”

Youth is a season of greatest danger; the mind is sanguine in all its expectations; the tide of sensual appetite is strong; and schemes of earthly happiness are formed without suspicion of disappointment.—— At this period the world is all fascination;— it holds out a delusive bait to inexperience.—— The charms of affluence, of honor, distinction, and pleasure present themselves as objects of the first consideration.—— The great adversary, the Devil, by his influence, magnifies all these scenes, and represents them to the imagination under the most captivating aspects.

The world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, that is, the love of pleasure,

pleasure, the love of riches, and the love of honor, or consequence, assail with all their powers the human heart, and they direct their attack under the skill and management of an enemy, who hath long reduced deception to a system.— Yet all these adversaries would fail of success, was it not that the heart of man is by nature alienated from God, through the ignorance that is in it.

True religion teaches man what is real excellence, points out to him the noblest objects, and fixes the pursuits of the soul.— O what an infinite blessing! at the very time, when the expectation is most ardent, the affections most lively, and the judgment most easily impressed; what a mercy! to have the pursuit well directed, and to be taught to regard the Almighty as the CHIEF GOOD.

Ah, young people, learn to love, fear, and serve God!— It is the grand preservative from the dangers, with which you are surrounded.— It is an introduction to the sublimest happiness of an intelligent Being.

Address your prayers to God; he will hear you from heaven his holy place, and direct your heart into his faith and fear.— Yes; I speak to the youngest here present. Little children, beg of God to give you his grace.— As you grow up, the world will grow more ensnaring; beg of God then the more earnestly to engage your youthful affections in his service; that the world may have
lost

lost its charms before you are more immediately exposed to it.— And, O do not forget the condescending, the endearing words of Immanuel, “Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of heaven.”

Is the early direction of the soul of such importance? then let me address you, whom God hath entrusted with the care of youth; let me remind you of the obligation, which is upon you.

Remember it is a talent, which God hath committed to your management, and you must answer at his bar for the trust. The blessing, or the curse of the rising generation will come upon your heads; yea; the happiness,[†] or the misery, which by the present mode of discharging your duty will eventually accrue, is beyond conception.

II. The danger and misery of departing from the living God.

What an awful instance of this has been exhibited to us! How happy had it been for our deceased friend had he continued in the good ways of God.— Alas! how was he deceived by sin, and allured from true happiness. He was tempted, drawn away of his own lust, and enticed; then lust, when it had conceived, brought forth sin, and sin, when it was finished, brought forth death. You have seen it, as to this world; and, but for

pleasure, the love of riches, and the love of honor, or consequence, assail with all their powers the human heart, and they direct their attack under the skill and management of an enemy, who hath long reduced deception to a system.— Yet all these adversaries would fail of success, was it not that the heart of man is by nature alienated from God, through the ignorance that is in it.

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the interposition of divine grace, it would have produced eternal death, as to the world to come.

My brethren, there is in the heart of every man a proneness to depart from God.— We are all by nature far from God “ the children of wrath.”— They who are renewed by the Holy Ghost, are still renewed, but in part.— There is still “ sin, which dwelleth” in them, and the nature of sin is a disposition to depart from God.— Apostacy is in every man’s nature ; yea, in those who are true believers on the Son of God.— Yes, my friends, in the most established Christians there is that remaining depravity, which would infallibly produce FINAL APOSTACY, if the grace of God, which is in Christ Jesus, did not prevent it.

This awful truth is abundantly confirmed by the record of Scripture. St. Paul urges it on the Hebrews (c. iii. v. 12.) “ Take heed, BRETHREN.”— It is not addressed to those, who made a bare profession of religion, but to those, whom he acknowledges as fellow-saints.— “ Tak heed, BRETHREN, lest there bein any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God.”— This divine Apostle, who was “ persuaded that neither things present nor things to come should be able to separate him from the love of God, which was in Christ Jesus,” (Rom. c. viii. v. 38, 39.) was the foremost to shew that he did not relax in spiritual dilligence, or holy caution, on account of this triumphant assurance.

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So far from it he declares in his 1st. Epistle to Corinthians, c. ix. v. 27. "I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means when I have preached to others, I myself should be cast away."—Again, he enjoins, "let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."

But what argument on this subject more cogently describes the danger of apostacy than the care and minute attention, which the great Jehovah exercises in protecting his church from this tremendous evil. "I the Lord do keep it, I will water it every moment; lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day." Isaiah c. 27. v. 3.

It becomes man then surely to be serious.—Guard against the first enticements of sin.—"Abstain from all appearance of evil."—"Pass the time of your sojourning here in fear."

Do I address any person, who once had serious reflections, but alas! they are now worn off;—you were once in earnest for eternity, but are now supine and negligent.—You had once "escaped the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of Christ," but you are at this time again entangled; yea, and overcome.—What cause have you to be alarmed! "Awake thou that sleepest; arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." Return to thy God; delay no longer; hear these awful words. "No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the king-

dom of God"—TO DEPART FROM GOD, O what an atrocious evil! what a violation of every moral and sacred obligation!—When a man departs from God, where may his departure terminate!

Do not say that the person just described, departed from God, and, after all, was brought back again, and finally saved. Can you insure it, that it will be your case? Can you ascertain it, that God will give you space to repent? or that God will vouchsafe you the grace of repentance?

As has often been observed, two thieves were crucified with the Savior of mankind; one went from the cross to heaven; the other to hell; one was saved, that none might despair; and but one was saved, that none might presume.—Consider this ye that forget God; ye that trifle with transgression.—Man knows the beginning of sin; but God only knows the end of it.

III. The deceitful appearance of earthly happiness.

All the ways of sin are ways of misery; for this reason, they lead from God, who is the source of felicity.

On this subject our deceased brother, though dead, yet speaketh.—You have heard his declaration.—At the time he was esteemed the gay,
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the lively companion, he was confessedly miserable; his wish was that there might be no hereafter, that the record of scripture might prove a cunningly devised fable.—He affected, but it was mere affectation, to throw off the convictions of truth.

My brethren, this is by no means an uncommon case. The man, who riots in convivial excesses, who spends his time in roving from one scene of dissipating amusement to another, is a creature the most miserable, and most to be pitied.—The man of pleasure, as he is ignorantly stiled, is a miserable man.—There is a false glare of pleasure, which his conduct assumes; but his heart is all the while completely MISERABLE.

He affects to have unshackled himself from what he profanely calls the restraints of superstition; but he never thinks on the subject of death, or eternity, without horror.—It is remarked of the celebrated Colonel Gardiner, that, in his days of profligacy, he frequently looked at the brute beasts with envy; he was persuaded they were not accountable for their actions; but he could not get rid of the conviction that one day God would bring him into judgment.—The ungodly and the sinner would gladly die the death of the righteous; tho', alas! they have no real desire to live his life.

Religion is true happiness.—It is heaven upon earth. The world would represent religion as
gloomy

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the lively companion, he was confessedly miserable; his wish was that there might be no hereafter, that the record of scripture might prove a cunningly devised fable.—He affected, but it was mere affectation, to throw off the convictions of truth.

My brethren, this is by no means an uncommon case. The man, who riots in convivial excesses, who spends his time in roving from one scene of dissipating amusement to another, is a creature the most miserable, and most to be pitied.—The man of pleasure, as he is ignorantly stiled, is a miserable man.—There is a false glare of pleasure, which his conduct assumes; but his heart is all the while completely MISERABLE.

He affects to have unshackled himself from what he profanely calls the restraints of superstition; but he never thinks on the subject of death, or eternity, without horror.—It is remarked of the celebrated Colonel Gardiner, that, in his days of profligacy, he frequently looked at the brute beasts with envy; he was persuaded they were not accountable for their actions; but he could not get rid of the conviction that one day God would bring him into judgment.—The ungodly and the sinner would gladly die the death of the righteous; tho', alas! they have no real desire to live his life.

Religion is true happiness.—It is heaven upon earth. The world would represent religion as
gloomy

gloomy, melancholy, and insipid;— let it be remembered that the world, like the God of the world, the Devil, was a LIAR from the beginning. The religion of Jesus Christ is “righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost;”*— while as to the world, he “that liveth in pleasure is dead while he liveth.”†

It is true, that, if a man would have the light of God’s countenance to shine upon his soul, he must deny himself, he must renounce the pompts and vanities of this wicked world; he must die to the world that he may enjoy God.— But, O what a blessed exchange!— The world passeth away; all its pleasures are uncertain, dissatisfying, transient: God is an infinite portion to the soul. A life spent in loving, praising, adoring, and serving God, is the very anticipation of the glory, which shall be revealed.— The joys of heaven will be the same in nature, though infinitely heightened in the degree of enjoyment.

IV. The nature and necessity of true repentance.

It consists in a genuine sorrow for sin, which arises from a perception of the evil of its nature, and is accompanied with an holy resolution to forsake it, and to turn unto God through Jesus Christ. The true penitent, when he compares himself with the infinitely holy, just, and good law of God, mourns and grieves.— He acknowledges God to be infinitely right, and himself infinitely wrong.

* Romans, c. xiv. v. 17. † 1 Timothy, c. v. v. 6.

wrong. His language is “ my sins have no excuse; I have acted a part the most base, the most ungrateful, the most rebellious; my sin is exceedingly sinful.”

When he lifts his eyes to Calvary, and beholds a bleeding Savior, he weeps afresh.— Love and grief divide his heart;—he beholds him, whom his sins pierced.— While, at the same time, by faith he lays hold on the hope, which the gospel thus sets before him;— and he finds joy and peace in believing.

My brethren;—in the name of the Great God, let me seriously enquire of you, are you acquainted with this godly sorrow, which will never be repented of? are you acquainted with this faith, by which a man is justified, and which worketh by love.

Have you laid it to heart, that you are “ miserable sinners?” have you been humbled before God on the account of it? have you ever felt your sins, as the excellent Liturgy of our Church expresses it, to be in remembrance grievous to you, and their burden to be intollerable? are you convinced that it is not by works of righteousness, which you have done, that you can hope for salvation? are you looking for the pardoning mercy of God, through Christ alone, as the one mediator between God and man? and are you endeavouring to live to the glory of God, walking in holiness and righteousness before him?

My

These are solemn enquiries.— We are all finners before God.— There is but ONE method of Salvation, approved of God in Christ Jesus.— * God commands all men every where to repent.—† Unless we repent, we shall all perish. ‡ He that believeth not shall be DAMNED.—And § without holiness no man shall see the Lord.

Let me entreat you to think seriously.—Death is hastening.— A few days more we shall meet at the bar of God. Be not deceived;— God will not be trifled with; if a man will not turn, he will whet his sword, he hath bent his bow, and made it ready. Psalm, vii. v. 12.

V. Our subject presents to our meditation the long suffering goodness, and pardoning mercy of the GREAT JEHOVAH.

O how easily might God destroy his enemies! Was the communication of his divine aid to be one moment suspended, man would be no more. In him we live, and move, and have our being: yet man, thus dependant, thus obligated, dares to rebel; and provoke his God. Why then does God spare man? why does the sun ever rise upon a guilty world? why, when God again, and again, hath come seeking fruit on the barren tree and finding none, doth he wait any longer?

In

* Acts, c. xvii. v. 30.

† Luke, c. xiii. v. 3.

‡ Mark, c. xvi. v. 16.

§ Hebrews, c. xii. v. 14.

It is because man hath an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.— He pleads before the throne, “ Lord spare the sinner ; let it “ alone this year also.” * — O consider this ye, who care not for God, neither is God in all your thoughts ; ye, who lost in the giddy maze of worldly pursuits, say to the Almighty, “ depart “ from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways ;” ye, who think lightly of sin, who trifle with divine injunctions, who pay no attention to the commandments of God your maker. “ **HE THAT HATH EARS TO HEAR, LET HIM HEAR.**” ye, if any such are present, who wallow in the filthy sin of drunkenness ; ye, who take God’s sacred name in vain ; who break the sabbath ; who are unjust in your dealings ; in a word, who are not day by day living in the fear of God, and the obedience of faith ; I say, **CONSIDER :** why are you spared ? why is it that ye are yet alive ?— Many of your acquaintances, many of your companions in folly and wickedness have been cut off. And are you still living ?— and within the reach of mercy ? Consider that it is to the patience of your God that you are indebted.— Ah ! how many of you is he at this time looking upon, and exclaiming, “ how shall I give thee up, Ephraim ? how shall I deliver thee Israel ? how shall I make thee as Admah ? how shall I set thee as Zeboim ? mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together.” † — **SUCH IS GOD, STRONG**
D. **and**

* Luke, c. xiii. v. 8.

† Hosea, c. xi. v. 8

and **PATIENT**; in power, and in forbearance, equally omnipotent.— The Lord is slow to anger

Another character of God is **PARDONING MERCY**.— Notwithstanding all the profligacy, rebellion, and enmity of heart, which a sinner may be charged with; yet no sooner does the sinner return, but his God receives him. These are his own words, “ O Israel return unto the Lord thy God, thou hast fallen by thine iniquity. I will heal their backslidings; I will love them freely; for mine anger is turned away.” * Such a character as this describes the God of the Holy Scriptures.— To shew mercy is his **GRAND PREROGATIVE**,— yes; my brethren, “ through means, which speak its value infinite,”— the blood of his only begotten Son.

The death of Jesus was the grand consideration presented to the enthroned Majesty, in consequence of which, God is faithful, and just to forgive. It was the one grand condition of pardon, peace, and eternal life being granted to sinful man, in a way consistent with the divine attributes.— God now can be just and justify the ungodly.†

When a sinner, the most abandoned, through divine grace, with “ repentance towards God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ”‡ embraces this hope of salvation, all the blessings of this gospel are his;— and they are his **FOR EVER**.— The benefit is glorious; and the grant is irrevocable.

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* Hosea, c. xiv. v. 1. & 14. † Comp. Romans, c. iii. v. 26. & c. iv. v. 5.

‡ Acts, c. xx. v. 21.

The long suffering and pardoning mercy of God was richly experienced by our deceased brother.— It was a subject he dwelt on with tears of love and gratitude.— And he might well dwell upon it; for in youth he had tasted how good the Lord was, and how blessed was the man that trusted in him.— He had also, as you have heard, been a grievous backslider; and had run awful lengths in sin.— Nevertheless, after a period of about 18 years departure from God, he was, I trust, brought back again; and he was brought with tokens of mercy, love, and pity, rather than indignation.— Like the Father of the prodigal, who, when he beheld his returning child yet a great way off, had compassion on him, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him: so the GREAT GOD, in this instance appears to have adopted the conduct of his own illustration.— No sooner did our deceased brother cry for mercy, than his heavenly Father, by tokens of his compassion invited his return.

He came with humble acknowledgement, “ I “ have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, “ and am no more worthy to be called thy son;” but, instead of wrath, (I trust) he found mercy; instead of condemnation, a free pardon; instead of exclusion, an abundant admission to the arms of EVERLASTING LOVE.

How justly descriptive is this of that name, whereby Jehovah will be called! THE LORD,

THE LORD GOD, MERCIFUL AND GRACIOUS,
LONG SUFFERING, ABUNDANT IN GOODNESS AND
TRUTH, &c. Exodus, c. xxxiv. v. 6.

Are these things so? are these the glorious doctrines of the everlasting gospel? are these realities?— Yes, as God liveth, they are.— Then let me urge them, my brethren, once more upon you; these are serious, VERY SERIOUS, concerns.— All must die — how soon! God only knoweth.— All are sinners deserving the wrath and curse of God,— and we have no power of our own to deliver ourselves from the awful sentence.— God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son to die upon the cross a sacrifice for sin, in order that whoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life. John, c. iii. v. 16.

This is God's method for the salvation of sinners;— and all, which God enjoins on you, is, receive it and be thankful.— To as many as receive it, he gives power to become the children of God; even to them, who believe on his name.

These persons through divine grace “repent
“then truly of their sins past, stedfastly purpo-
“sing to lead a new life;” they are persuaded that
the Redeemer by the merit of his obedience unto
death hath procured pardon and acceptance with
God for all that believe on his name; they there-
fore

fore exercise a “ lively faith in God’s mercy through Christ.”— And as many as thus believe are “ accounted righteous before God, through the merit of the Lord Jesus Christ by faith and not for their own works or deservings.” *

The sense of obligation and duty, the lively emotions of gratitude, which are by this means excited in the heart, teach this happy man to love God, and to love his neighbour.— Hence good works follow, not as the conditions but the consequents of obtaining mercy, as the grateful return of a heart, whose genuine language is what shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits? happy man! his present portion is peace, and his future inheritance will be GLORY.

You observe then, my brethren, that whoever will be saved must repent, and believe the gospel; and whoever repents and believes bringeth forth works meet for faith and repentance. The intemperate becomes sober; the profane reveres the name of God;— the sabbath breaker keeps holy the sabbath day; the unjust becomes upright;— the proud and passionate become meek and lowly; every one, who truly receives the gospel, strives to walk, even as Christ walked.— For the grace of God which bringeth salvation teacheth effectually to deny ungodliness, and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world. Titus, c. ii. v. 11. and 12. Is this your
conduct

* Art. xi.

conduct? you have had many warnings, many narrow escapes, you have committed many sins, you have experienced much of God's forbearance, trifle no more. "Strive to enter in at the strait gate," use diligently the means of grace; call upon God in diligent prayer; read the scriptures; attend divine service; avoid the company and resorts of the gay and the abandoned.—"If thou seek God, he will be found of thee; but, if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever."

Our deceased brother spake upon his death bed with heart-felt gratitude on the benefits of a pious education;— I pray God, as a parent, his remarks may ever remain imprinted upon my soul:

O ye parents, masters of families, governors of youth, remember the solemn charge, which God has committed to you;— examine narrowly your precepts and your practice; see that your authority be used for God, and that your offspring may be the Lord's.— The object is most important. Parents! who have at the sacred font dedicated your children to God, take heed that you are not the persons, who lead them into "the pomps and vanities of this wicked world."— Let it be your daily prayer and endeavour, "that all carnal affections may die in them, and all things belonging to the Spirit may live, and grow in them;" if, after all your efforts, success does not seem to attend you, still do not give way to despair, but be encouraged to go on; redouble your prayers,
and

and endeavours.— The parent of our deceased brother waited long for a blessing on his offspring; his request was delayed; but not denied. His prayers were at length answered, and his language now is “I cried unto the Lord and he heard me.”

In a word, let me now conclude with most seriously charging it upon you and myself that we be serious; that we flee from the wrath to come; that we lay hold on the hope of the gospel.

Would to God I could speak more seriously. I entreat your prayers, my beloved brethren, that my addresses to you may be more and more becoming the important concern of eternity; that I may not seek to entertain, but to edify you; remembering the account, which I must one day give, and that, before our next meeting together, I may be called to give it.

O let me then invite,—intreat,—warn every sinner here present, by the love with which God loved the world; by the dying love of the Lord Jesus Christ;—by the condescending influence of the Holy Spirit;—by the happiness of the godly, here, and hereafter; and, if these considerations affect you not, by the misery of those, who once trifled with eternity as perhaps you do now, O flee; flee; flee from the wrath to come.—The door of mercy is open; and the God of mercy waits in Christ Jesus to be gracious.

Then,

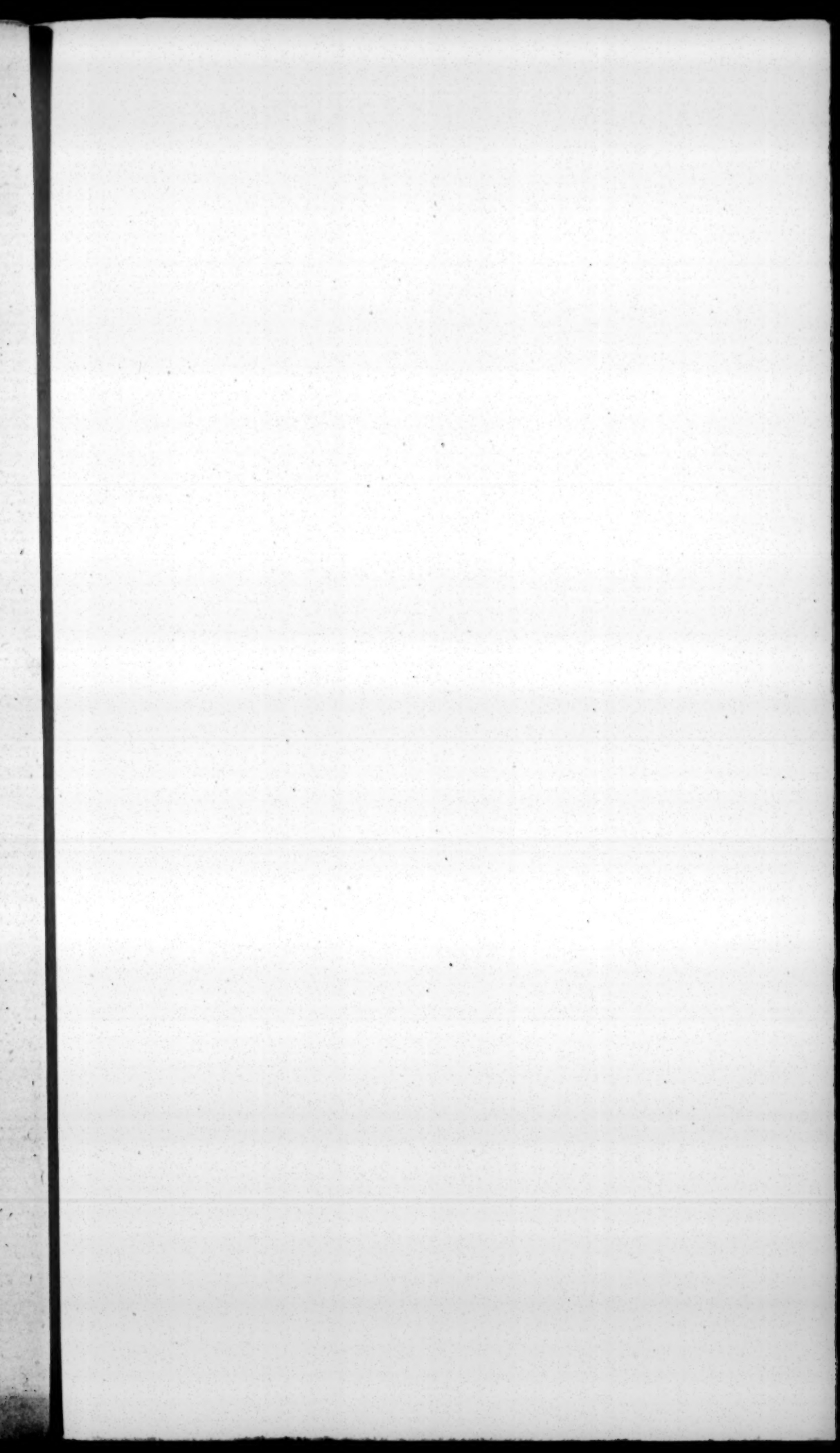
Then, O then, glory attends you; God will receive you; there will be joy in heaven over the repenting sinner;— you shall enjoy a heaven begun on earth, in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost;— you shall meet death with smiles of triumph;— and, when the world and all earthly concerns are for ever over, you shall share in an “inheritance, which is incorruptible, undefiled, and which fadeth not away.”



F I N I S.

E R R A T A.

Page 6, line 23, for dissipation, read dissipation. P. 9, l. 6, for briesly, r. briefly. P. 11, l. 25, for occasionally, r. occasionally. P. 20, l. 21, r. fellow-saints. P. 20, l. 21, for tak, r. take. P. 20, l. 22, r. be in: P. 24, l. 11, for pompts, r. pomps. P. 25, l. 23, for intollerable, r. intolerable.



Then, O then, glory awaits you; God will reward you, there will be joy in heaven over the repenting sinner;—you shall enjoy a heaven begun on earth, in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost;—you shall meet death with faints of triumph;—yea, even the World and all earthly resorts are for you over, you that have in an "Atonement" which is irreproachable, unassailed, and which shall last for ever.

FINIS

ERRATA.

Page 6, line 22, for dissipation, read dissipation. P. 9, l. 6, for breath, r. breath. P. 21, l. 23, for occasionally, r. occasionally. P. 22, l. 21, r. fellow-labourers. P. 22, l. 21, for 100, r. 100. P. 22, l. 22, r. be him. P. 24, l. 11, for 100, r. 100. P. 25, l. 23, for intolerable, r. intolerable.

